

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-09

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-10 ISO-00 SR-02 ORM-01 DPW-01

CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05

PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 /080 W

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P R 100902Z APR 75

FM AMCONSUL TABRIZ

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 114

INFO AMEMBASSY ANKARA

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

USMISSION GENEVA

USUN 002

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

AMCONSULATE KHORRAMSHAHR

USCINCEUR

AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 TABRIZ 0017

BEIRUT PASS BAGHAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, SREF, IR, IZ

SUBJECT: IRAQI KURDS IN IRAN: SITUATION AND REQUEST

SUMMARY: REPRESENTATIVE OF GENERAL BARZANI CALLED ON ME APRIL 5 TO REQUEST THAT USG USE ITS INFLUENCE WITH THE INTERNATIONAL RED CROSS (ICRC) TO OBTAIN CONTINUED, IF LOW LEVEL, ICRC ASSISTANCE AND A CONTINUING ICRC PRESENCE IN REFUGEE CAMPS. REQUEST IS BASED ON FEAR THAT IRAN IS GOING TO INSTITUTE HARSH MEASURES TO FORCE THE REFUGEES TO RETURN TO IRAQ. DURING CONVERSATION HE STATED: 1) THAT GENERAL BARZANI AND THE KDP LEADERSHIP HAVE GIVEN UP ALL THOUGHT OF CONTINUING AN ARMED STRUGGLE; 2) THAT KURDS WERE
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EXTREMELY BITTER ABOUT IRAN'S CHANGE OF POLICY; 3) THAT

LEADERSHIP OF KDP FEARS FOR ITS OWN SAFETY SHOULD IT RETURN TO IRAQ AND THAT THEY ARE ALSO WORRIED THAT LARGE MASSES OF KURDISH FARMERS WILL BE FORCIBLY RESETTLED OUTSIDE OF IRAQI KURDISTAN SHOULD THEY RETURN; AND 4) THAT THEY SEE IRANIAN POLICY MOVING IN DIRECTION OF SCATTERING EDUCATED KURDS AROUND IRAN WHILE MOUNTING INCREASING PRESSURE ON UNEDUCATED REFUGEES TO RETURN TO IRAQ. APPRECIATE DEPARTMENT REACTION. END SUMMARY.

1. DR ASFANDIAR (PROJECT), A KURDISH SURGEON PREVIOUSLY KNOWN TO ME, CAME TO TABRIZ APRIO 5 STATING THAT HE WAS REPRESENTATION GENERAL BARZANI, NOW IN TOWN OF NAGHADEH. DR. ASFANDIAR CONFIRMED PREVIOUS REPORTS THAT ALL FIGHTING HAD CEASED. HE STATED THAT OVER 5,000 PESH MERGA HAVE SURRENDERED TO IRAQIS. MANY OTHERS HAVE CROSSED OVER INTO IRAN. WHILE SOME INDIVIDUALS MAY HAVE HIDDEN WEAPONS AND HAVE HOPES OF FIGHTING, THERE ARE NO KDP PLANS TO CONTINUE WAR NOR WERE ANY WEAPONS BEING RETAINED. ALL KURDISH HEAVY WEAPONS IN BORDER AREA WERE DUMPED AT HAJI OMRAN AND HAVE ALREADY BEEN COLLECTED BY MIXED IRAQI-ALGERIAN MILITARY GROUP WHICH ENTERED IRAQ ON HAMILTON ROAD FROM PIRANSHAHR IN IRAN AND WITH IRANIAN ASSISTANCE.

2. THE KURDS FEEL THAT IRAN IS BEGINNING A POLICY OF GRADUATED PRESSURE TO INDUCE REFUGEES TO EITHER RETURN TO IRAQ OR, IN CASE OF PROFESSIONALS AND TECHNICIANS, TO LEAVE BORDER AREAS AND TAKE JOBS IN IRAN. AS SIGNS OF THIS PRESSURE THEY CITE FACT THAT ADMINISTRATION OF MOST CAMPS HAS NOW BEEN TAKEN OVER BY IRANIAN ARMY, THAT FOOD AND WATER HAVE AT TIMES, AND IN CERTAIN CAMPS, BEEN REDUCED OR CUT OFR ONE OR TWO DAYS, THAT KURDISH HARKI TRIBESMEN WHO HAD BEEN LIVING OUTSIDE CAMPS WERE ORDERED TO SELL ALL THEIR LIVESTOCK IMMEDIATELY AND MOVE TO REFUGEE CAMPS, AND THAT IRANIAN OFFICIALS ARE CONTINUING TO URGE MOST REFUGEES TO RETURN WHILE OFFERING GOOD JOBS AND SALARIES TO PROFESSIONALS IF THEY WILL LEAVE CAMPS AND WORK ELSEWHERE. COMMENT: WHILE NONE OF THIS ADDS UP TO PROOF POSITIVE THAT HARSHER MEASURES OF

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PERSUASION ARE IN STORE FOR FUTURE, KURDS ARE CLEARLY WORRIED.

3. BARZANI AND KDP LEADERSHIP, ACCORDING TO DR. ASFANDIAR, HAVE TWO MAIN REASONS FOR WISHING TO HOLD PEOPLE IN THE CAMPS TOGETHER. ONE IS VERY REAL FEAR OF WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO THEM IF THEY RETURN TO IRAQ. STORIES OF RETURNEES BEING EXECUTED AND FARMERS BEING

DENIED PERMISSION TO RETURN TO THEIR LAND ARE CIRCULATING
WIDELY. WITH BORDER CLOSED AND ACCESS TO CAMPS
LIMITED VERY LITTLE RELIABLE INFORMATION IS NOW COMING IN
FROM IRAQI SIDE OF BORDER AND THIS INCREASES THE
FEELING OF FEAR AND UNCERTAINTY. SECOND, KURDS
BELIEVE (OR ARE TRYING TO BELIEVE) THAT IRANO-IRAQI
HONEYMOON OF GOOD RELATIONS WILL BE SHORTLIVED AND THAT
IRAN WILL EVENTUALLY WANT TO MAKE USE OF KURDS AGAIN.
WHILE THEY SEE NO PROSPECT OF RENEWED FIGHTING THEY THINK
THAT SUCH A SITUATION MIGHT INCREASE THEIR POLITICAL
WEIGHT IN DEALING WITH BAGHDAD.

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AMEMBASSY CAIRO

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 TABRIZ 0017

BEIRUT PASS BAGHAD

4. GIVEN ABOVE FACTORS, GENERAL BARZANI HAS REQUESTED
THAT USG USE ITS INFLUENCE WITH ICRC TO MAINTAIN
LOW LEVEL OF ASSISTANCE TO THE REFUGEES AND HENCE

ACCESS TO CAMPS. WITHOUT THIS THEY FEAR INCREASING ISOLATION FROM OUTSIDE WORLD AND POSSIBLE IRANIAN MISTREATMENT. KURDS HAVE HEARD THAT IRAN HAS ALREADY TOLD ICRC THERE IS NO FURTHER WORK FOR IT IN IRAN AND IT SHOULD GO HOME.

5. I STATED THAT USG HAD, AS DR. ASFANDIAR KNEW, NOT BEEN INVOLVED IN WAR AND HAD NO WISH TO INSERT ITSELF POLITICALLY NOW THAT PEACE SEEMED TO BE RETURNING TO AREA. AT SAME TIME WE ARE SENSITIVE TO HUMANITARIAN QUESTIONS AND I PROMISED TO PASS REQUEST TO DEPARTMENT. CONFIDENTIAL

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6. COMMENT: FROM VERY LIMITED VANTAGE POINT OF TABRIZ IT DOES SEEM THAT CONTINUED INVOLVEMENT OF ICRC WOULD BE USEFUL, EVEN IF NOT FOR EXACTLY REASONS GIVEN BY KURDS. IF KURDISH FEARS OF POOR TREATMENT AND PRESSURE TO RETURN TO IRAQ MATERIALIZE, THERE WILL PROBABLY BE PRESS ATTACKS ACCUSING IRAN OF MISTREATMENT OF A BETRAYED PEOPLE, AND THE U.S. COULD BE ACCUSED OF HAVING TURNED A BLIND EYE TO SUCH CONDITIONS. A LOW-LEVEL ICRC PRESENCE WOULD PROVIDE INTERNATIONALLY ACCEPTABLE TESTIMONY OF CAMP CONDITIONS WHICH, TO DATE, HAVE BEEN QUITE GOOD. FURTHER, IF BAGHAD DOES NOT APPLY EXTREMELY HARSH AND REPRESSIVE MEASURES TO RETURNEES, THEN ICRC REPORTS TO REFUGEES ON IRAQ MIGHT WELL HELP PERSUADE LARGE NUMBERS OF REFUGEES TO RETURN TO IRAQ IN NOT TOO DISTANT FUTURE. THIS WOULD LARGELY DEFUSE REFUGEE SITUATION AND WOULD ALSO LESSEN REQUESTS FOR US TO ACCEPT LARGE NUMBERS OF REFUGEES. IF DEPARTMENT CONCURS IN THIS BELIEF THAT LOW-LEVEL ICRC INVOLVEMENT WOULD BE HELPFUL, PERHAPS ON BOTH SIDES OF BORDER, AN APPROPRIATE METHOD TO CHANGE IRAQ'S MIND WOULD BE TO ASK EGYPTIANS AND ALGERIANS TO ATTEMPT TO PERSUADE IRAQIS THAT PURELY OBSERVER DELEGATION FROM ICRC WOULD SHOW APPROPRIATE HUMANITARIAN CONCERN AND ALSO SUBSTANTIATE IRAQI CLAIMS THEY NOT WAGING GENOCIDAL WAR.

7. EMBASSY COMMENT: OFFICIAL ICRC STATEMENT ON END OF ITS ASSISTANCE TO KURDS (GENEVA 2398) CLEARLY LEAVES OPER POSSIBILITY THAT ICRC COULD BE PERSUADED TO RENDER FURTHER HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE. EMBASSY AGREES THAT EGYPTIANS OR ALGERIANS COULD BE HELPFUL IN URGING IRAQIS TO AGREE TO LIMIT ICRC PROGRAM, JUST AS EMBASSY RECOMMENDED EARLIER THAT SADAT AND BOUMEDIENE COULD BE HELPFUL IN OBTAINING EXTENSION OF DEADLINE ON REFUGEE MOVEMENTS ACROSS IRAN-IRAQ BORDER (TEHRAN 2750). NEUMANN

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